

In 2022, Côte d'Ivoire made significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Ivoirian government conducted 9,471 inspections, a 234 percent increase from the previous year, and recruited 100 additional child labor agents to track instances of child labor on cocoa farms and in production zones. The government also officially created the National Sustainable Cocoa Committee (Comité National du Cacao Durable), which is designed to implement the National Strategic Plan to address deforestation, child labor, and the low incomes of cocoa farmers. In addition, the government opened 91 new secondary schools, 517 new primary schools, and 227 new preschools during the reporting period. However, children in Côte d'Ivoire are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced labor in the harvesting of cocoa and coffee. The government does not have a mechanism to assess civil penalties for labor law violations, and the lack of financial resources and personnel may have hindered labor law enforcement efforts.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Côte d'Ivoire. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report. In addition, NORC at the University of Chicago released a report detailing findings from a sectorally representative survey conducted in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire during the cocoa harvesting season of 2018–2019. This report found an increase in child labor (and hazardous child labor) in cocoa production during the 10-year timeframe since the survey in 2008–2009. (1)

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	25.6 (Unavailable)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	70.1
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	21.8
Primary Completion Rate (%)		79.6

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2021, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2023. (2)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 5 (MICS 5), 2016. (3)

Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector and activity.

Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Production of cocoa, including burning† and clearing fields;† cutting down trees† to expand cocoa plantations; exposure to agrochemicals;† harvesting, drying, and fermenting cocoa beans; using sharp tools to break pods;† and transporting heavy loads† of cocoa pods and water (1,4-9)
	Production of cereals and coffee, including applying chemical fertilizers,† spraying pesticides,† cutting down trees,† and burning† and clearing fields† (5,6,10,11)
	Production of palm oil, honey, cashews, and rubber (5-7,9,12,13)
	Fishing, including deep sea diving;† repairing and hauling nets; and cleaning,† salting, drying, descaling, and selling fish (5,6,11)
	Production of charcoal† (10)
	Forestry (7,9,14)

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Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity (Cont.)

Sector/Industry	Activity
Industry	Mining, [†] including crushing and transporting stones, blasting rocks, digging, working underground, sieving, and extracting gold with mercury or cyanide (6,7,11,15)
	Manufacturing, including repairing automobiles (7,11)
	Construction, [†] activities unknown (11)
Services	Domestic work (3,5-7,9,11,16)
	Working in transportation and carrying goods [‡] (4,6,7,9-11,17)
	Street vending and commerce (5-7,9-11,15,17)
	Work in restaurants (5,9,12,15)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor [‡]	Mining, carpentry, construction, domestic work, street vending, restaurants, and agriculture, including in the production of cocoa, coffee, cotton, and rubber, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,6,7,9,10,12)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (6,7,9,13,15)
	Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking (9,18)
	Begging as <i>talibés</i> by Koranic teachers, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (19)

[†] Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182.

[‡] Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a)–(c) of ILO C. 182.

Due to security issues in both Mali and Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire has an estimated 13,214 refugees (2,489 households), of which an estimated 59 percent are children. Children are also brought to Côte d'Ivoire from those countries for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor, including in begging, cocoa production, and artisanal mining. (5,9,10,12,16,20) Children from Côte d'Ivoire are also subjected to human trafficking for forced labor in domestic work within the country and North Africa. (5,9,10,12,16,20)

School is mandatory for children ages 6 to 16 in Côte d'Ivoire. Although the Law on Education provides for free education, students are often required to pay for textbooks and uniforms, which may be prohibitive to some families. (5,7,21-24) In addition, birth registration or identity documents are required for students to take entrance exams for secondary school, posing a barrier to continued education beyond the primary level. (6,9,25)




A shortage of teachers, poor school infrastructure, lack of transportation systems in rural areas, and inadequate sanitation facilities have negatively impacted children's ability to attend school. (5,6,9) Research also suggests that some students are physically and sexually abused at school, which may deter some students from attending school. Because of this, roughly one in four girls in Côte d'Ivoire are not able to attend primary school. (5,7,26,27) In addition, there remains insufficient classroom space in rural areas for the number of students enrolled. (7)

Results from the International Cocoa Initiatives' Child Labor Monitoring and Remediation System indicate that the number children working in hazardous working conditions increased, which is at least partially attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. (28) Research showed that despite an upward spike in child labor during the partial government shutdown as a reaction to the pandemic, in cocoa-producing areas the level of child labor returned to pre-pandemic levels at the end of the partial government shut down. (29) Research also indicates that between 2008 and 2019, there were significant increases in cocoa production and, during that time, child labor in high-producing zones remained stable. However, in small- and medium-producing zones, child labor increased. (1,8) During this time, however, there was an increase in children attending schools in cocoa-growing areas. (1,8)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Côte d'Ivoire has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

	Convention	Ratification
	ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
	ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	UN CRC	✓
	UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

The government's laws and regulations are in line with relevant international standards (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 23.2 of the Labor Code; Article 16 of the Constitution (22,30)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 4 of the Prohibitions of Hazardous Work List (31)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 5–11 of the Prohibitions of Hazardous Work List; Articles 6 and 19 of the Prohibition of Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Law (31,32)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 5 of the Constitution; Articles 4, 6, 7, 11–14, 20–23, and 4 and 8 of the Prohibition of Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Law; Article 3 of the Labor Code (22,30,32)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 5 of the Constitution; Articles 11, 12, 20–22, and 26 of the Prohibition of Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Law; Article 370 of the Penal Code; Articles 4.4 and 6 of the Anti-Trafficking Law (22,32-34)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 5–11 of the Prohibitions of Hazardous Work List, Articles 8, 9, 15, and 24–29 of the Prohibition of Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Law; Articles 4.4 and 6 of the Anti-Trafficking Law (31,32,34)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 4 and 30 of the Prohibition of Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Law (32)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 56.4 of the Armed Forces Code; Articles 7, 8 and 18 of the Law Determining the Conditions for Entering the Military (35,36)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes*		Article 56.4 of the Armed Forces Code (35)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Articles 4 and 31 of the Prohibition of Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Law (32)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 10 of the Constitution; Article 2.1 of the Law on Education (22-24)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 2 of the Law on Education (24)

* Country has no conscription (36,37)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 5). However, gaps exist within the operations of enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

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Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role & Activities
Ministry of Employment and Social Protection (MEPS)	Develops, proposes, and enforces all labor laws, including those related to child labor. (5,7,38,39) The Anti-Trafficking Unit, a Sub-Directorate, and the Ministry of Women, Family, and Children provide support to survivors of child trafficking and other forms of child labor. (5,16) MEPS has authority over the child labor monitoring system (<i>Système d'Observation et de Suivi du Travail des Enfants en Côte d'Ivoire</i> [SOSTECI]), which enables communities to collect and analyze statistical data on the worst forms of child labor. As of 2022, there are 20,000 local SOSTECI committees in operation for the purpose of improving local coordination and exchange of information on child labor and child welfare in cocoa production areas. (5-7,11,17) The General Labor Directorate in Abidjan coordinates the regional offices and their efforts to address child labor. (7,18,40)
Ministry of the Interior and Security	Through its Anti-Trafficking Unit, leads efforts to enforce criminal laws against child trafficking. Through its Vice Squads (<i>Brigades Mondaine</i>), addresses commercial sexual exploitation, including the exploitation of children. (5,9) Through its Unit for Combating Transnational Organized Crime, supports UNODC's West African Coast Initiative, which aims to improve cross-border cooperation to address crimes, including human trafficking. (37,41)
Ministry of Justice and Human Rights	Investigates and prosecutes crimes related to child labor, including its worst forms. Through its Directorate of Judicial Protection of Childhood and Youth, assists with investigations and implements the ministry's child protection policy. (5,9) The Ministry of Justice and Human Rights is charged with rehabilitating children who have been detained or arrested. (7)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2022, labor law enforcement agencies in Côte d'Ivoire took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including insufficient human resource allocation.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$305,588 (6)	\$305,600 (9)
Number of Labor Inspectors	310 (6)	344 (9)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	No (30)	No (30)
Training for Labor Inspectors Provided	Yes (6)	Yes (9)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted at Worksite	2,836 (6)	9,471 (9)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (6)	0 (9)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	N/A (6)	N/A (9)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	N/A (6)	N/A (9)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (6)	Yes (9)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (6)	Yes (9)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (30)	Yes (30)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (6)	Yes (9)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (6)	Yes (9)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (6)	Yes (9)

During the reporting period, the government recruited 100 additional child labor agents to track instances of child labor on cocoa farms and production zones, though these agents have not begun working in the field as of yet. In addition, the government also provided motorcycles, fuel, and computers to 30 local labor inspectorates to help with inspections throughout the country. (9)

Research indicates that Côte d'Ivoire does not have an adequate number of labor inspectors to carry out their mandated duties. (42) The labor inspectorate suffers from a lack of resources, including insufficient staff. (6,38,39) While some labor inspections are done in the informal sector, the majority of the inspections are done in the formal sector, in which child labor is less likely to occur. (7,9,43)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2022, criminal law enforcement agencies in Côte d'Ivoire took actions to address child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including insufficient human resource allocation.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Training for Criminal Investigators Provided	Yes (6)	Yes (9)
Number of Investigations	789 (9)	832 (9)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	789 (9)	587 (9)
Number of Convictions	594 (9)	392 (9)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (6)	Yes (9)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (6)	Yes (9)

During the reporting period, Ivoirian Police Forces arrested four child traffickers and rescued nine Togolese minors, all of whom were under 18 years old. The accused in this case are still awaiting trial. (9) However, the Anti-Trafficking Unit continued to lack the resources and personnel to adequately enforce criminal child labor laws throughout the country. (6,9)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established a key mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8).

Table 8. Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Activities
National Monitoring Committee on Actions to Combat Trafficking, Exploitation, and Child Labor (CNS)	Supervises, monitors, and evaluates all government activities related to child labor and child trafficking, including making policy recommendations and harmonizing laws with international conventions. Chairs the Interministerial Committee for the Fight against Trafficking, Exploitation, and Child Labor (CIM), and provides medical and social assistance to survivors of child labor and trafficking. (5,44,45) Chaired by the First Lady of Côte d'Ivoire, and comprises both international and domestic partners. (5,15,16,44,46) During the reporting period, CNS reported that 2,116 children (1,576 boys, and 540 girls) were removed from situations of trafficking, exploitation, violence, and child labor. Once these children were removed, they were evaluated by social workers who could help determine the type of care they needed. (9) The type of care provided included shelters, healthcare, and educational and psychological services. (9)

During the reporting period, the government officially created the National Sustainable Cocoa Committee (*Comité National du Cacao Durable*), which is designed to implement the National Strategic Plan to address deforestation, child labor, and low incomes of cocoa farmers. (9)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9).

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description & Activities
National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking, Exploitation, and Child Labor (2019–2023)	Coordinated by CNS and the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the fight against Trafficking, Exploitation, and Child Labor, which aims to significantly reduce the number of children engaged in the worst forms of child labor by drawing on best practices and building on lessons learned from the implementation of previous national action plans. Priorities include increasing efforts to mobilize resources at the national level, reinforcing regional cooperation and public-private partnerships, incorporating worst forms of child labor considerations into national and sector-specific programming, and reinforcing the monitoring and evaluation of the National Strategy for the fight against human trafficking and the worst forms of child labor. (47) During the reporting period, the policy remained active and continued all of its previous efforts. (9)

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Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor (Cont.)

Policy	Description & Activities
Policies Involving SOSTECI	Aim to strengthen and expand SOSTECI. Includes a partnership agreement between the International Cocoa Initiative and CNS in support of the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking, Exploitation, and Child Labor. (5) The Decent Work Country Program (2017–2020), in collaboration with ILO, aimed to improve working conditions, strengthen SOSTECI, and address the worst forms of child labor. (48,49) The National Development Plan (2016–2020) allocated almost \$6.1 million over 5 years to conduct diagnostic studies on child labor and child trafficking, construct three child protection centers, and develop a national action plan to address human trafficking, particularly of girls. (50) During the reporting period, the government organized multiple workshops on SOSTECI in high-risk areas which included Nawa, Vavoua, Minignan, Bagoué, Sassandra, Bouna, San-Pedro, Issia, Haut Sassandra, and Toumodi. (9)
Labor Inspection Strategy (2019–2023)	Through the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection, with assistance from ILO, aims to enable the government to ensure the application of legal provisions for the improvement of working conditions and the removal of children from work through the inspection of worksites, the provision of counseling, and monitoring. (14,43) In 2022, undertook activities related to building the capacity of the inspectors, monitoring inspection units, and raising public awareness. (9)

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (51)

During the reporting period, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, along with EU stakeholders, supported the Alliance on Sustainable Cocoa, which creates an outline for improving the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of cocoa production and trade, including eliminating child labor. (52,53)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2022, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including inadequate programs to address the full scope of the problem in all sectors.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description & Activities
ACCEL AFRICA	The program was co-funded by the EU, under the Project "Accelerate action for the elimination of child labor in Africa's supply chains" (<i>Accélérer l'action pour l'élimination du travail des enfants dans les chaînes d'approvisionnement en Afrique</i> , or ACCEL AFRICA). UNICEF and ILO representatives provided participants with strategies for synchronizing efforts to eradicate child labor. (54) During the reporting period, the government organized a workshop on child labor for 50 labor inspectors. (9)
Industry-Funded Projects	Aim to increase sustainability in the cocoa sector, improve farmer livelihoods and access to education—including increasing access to education opportunities for children—and address the worst forms of child labor in cocoa-growing areas. Some projects support the spirit of the 2010 Declaration. (48) In November 2017, the Governments of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire signed an agreement to fight deforestation and protect the cocoa supply chain. During the reporting period, the government partnered with private sector companies to implement the Cocoa for Good Strategy, a \$500 million investment to make cocoa production in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire more sustainable and transparent. (48,52,55) In addition, private industry continued to implement the Cocoa and Forests Initiative to this end. (52,55)
World Bank-Funded Projects	Aim to improve access to education and provide poverty relief. Includes the Productive Social Safety Net (2015–2024), which has supported 127,000 beneficiary households (representing 766,253 individuals), of which 47,435 are women, the main recipients of the cash transfers. In addition, the Unique Social Registry currently counts 315,925 poor and vulnerable individuals, while progress is being made in terms of timely digital payments to beneficiaries. (56,57)

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/ilab-project-page-search>

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (6)

In 2022, the government signed the U.S.-Côte d'Ivoire Child Protection Compact Partnership, a non-binding multi-year \$10 million plan to address child sex trafficking and forced child labor in Côte d'Ivoire. The government also opened 91 new secondary schools, 517 new primary schools, and 227 new preschools during the reporting period. (9,13) In addition, the government increased its education budget by 11 percent from \$1.8 million to \$1.97 million in 2022, and increased its social services program budget, which addresses social inequalities and looks to reduce poverty, to \$5.5 billion. Moreover, the government continued its national project

to map the locations of cocoa farms throughout the country. (9,13) Approximately 350,000 out of the estimated 993,000 cocoa farmers have registered. Finally, to address the issue of birth registration, the government partnered with UNICEF to implement new birth registration mechanisms to ensure that children are registered immediately at birth, or during vaccination campaigns. (9,13) Because of this, the government decreased the number of children without birth certificates from 914,913 students in 2020–2021 to 672,010 students in 2022. (9,25)

Despite an increase in activities, the scope of existing programs, including in cocoa, is insufficient to fully address the extent of the child labor problem in Côte d'Ivoire. (5,6) Current programming is not expansive enough, evidenced by the fact the child labor prevalence rate has not declined. The industry-funded NORC report released in October 2020 found that programs like the Child Labor Monitoring and Remediation System, access to quality to education, and programs to increase farmer yields and household income need to be scaled and expanded to impact more families. (1)

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor in Côte d'Ivoire (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Establish a mechanism to assess penalties for child labor violations.	2014 – 2022
	Ensure that the labor inspectorate receives a sufficient amount of funding to conduct inspections and investigations throughout the country, including in the informal sector.	2014 – 2022
	Ensure that criminal law enforcement agencies receive the resources and personnel needed to adequately enforce laws related to the worst forms of child labor.	2018 – 2022
	Increase the number of labor inspectors from 344 to 624 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 9.4 million people.	2009 – 2022
Social Programs	Improve the accessibility and transportation capacity of schools; ensure that schools are free of physical and sexual abuse; and increase the number of teachers, textbooks, sanitation facilities, and schools, particularly in rural areas. Ensure that all children have access to birth registration and identity documents.	2011 – 2022
	Expand existing programs, including the Child Labor Monitoring and Remediation System, and institute new ones aimed at addressing the full scope of the child labor problem in Côte d'Ivoire, including outside the cocoa sector.	2009 – 2022
	Ensure that survivors of the worst forms of child labor are able to access social services throughout the country.	2015 – 2022
	Ensure that there are sufficient classrooms available for all students enrolled.	2020 – 2022

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